



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Jan. 5, 2005

Contact: Jamal D. Ware
(202) 225-4121

House Intelligence Chairman Says Briefings Proper

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, sent the following letter to Ranking Member Jane Harman, D-Calif:

4 January, 2005

The Honorable Jane Harman
Ranking Democrat
House Permanent Select Committee
On Intelligence
H405 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Jane:

I am writing in response to your 4 January, 2005, letter to the President, a copy of which we received after it was released to the media.

I understand your request of the President is to make information regarding highly classified aspects of the NSA program that was illegally disclosed, at great detriment to national security, available to a wider range of people. I have been Chairman of the Intelligence Committee for nearly 17 months, and during that time you and I have taken several briefings on the NSA program in question. I am surprised and somewhat bewildered at your request because, in my observation, you have never previously complained or stated concern about the limited number of people briefed on this program. Now you have written two letters to the President stating such concern, and, in fact, accusing the President of violating the law based on, what I consider, a strained analysis. The statute requires the Committee to be informed – the Committee has been informed, in good faith by the President of the United States, on a continuing basis for as long as you have been Ranking Member and I have been Chairman.

In the past, you have been fully supportive of this program and the practice by which we have overseen it. I find your position now completely incongruent. As you and I have discussed, I believe we are providing the proper oversight of the highly sensitive intelligence matters that require limited access. And, as I have stated many times, we need to do the nation's secret business in secret. We are going to continue to do that in the best way possible to protect American lives.

Sincerely,
Peter Hoekstra
Chairman